

Technology available on internet allows thieves to make a copy of unsuspecting victims' ATM cards

Bethpage, NY— Today, Congressman Steve Israel (D-Huntington) joined officials at Bethpage Federal credit Union and the Nassau County Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau to warn consumers of an increase in ATM Skimming that costs up to \$1 billion annually. Thieves install small devices on cash machines that are increasingly difficult to detect. The device collects account information from a debit card's magnetic strip, giving criminals the ability to download the information onto a blank card for future purchases and use at other ATMs. Rep. Israel sent a letter to the United States Secret Service (USSS) calling for increased public education and for them to raise awareness on ATM skimming.

Rep. Israel said, "Consumers should be aware that there has been an increase in ATM skimming incidents over the past three years and take steps to protect their financial information. I'm also calling on the Secret Service to increase public education to combat these types of crimes. Our consumers deserve to use an ATM without fear of their accounts being compromised."

Kirk Kordeleski, CEO of Bethpage Federal Credit Union said, "Consumers should not fear using their debit cards, they should just be aware and use machines within well-lit secure areas that make it difficult for scanners to be installed. We encourage our members to check statements regularly and use ATM's at Branches or large retail outlets like CVS, Costco, 7/11 and King Kullen. Bethpage, like other financial institutions, has extensive fraud monitoring that usually detects fraud early in the process to prevent fraud and protect our members."

Diane Peress, Bureau Chief of the Nassau County District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau said, "Thieves who steal our personal information also take our piece of mind. As criminals find new ways to target victims, it is essential that consumers educate themselves about how to protect their personal information, and that they immediately report suspicious activity to law enforcement. I thank Congressman Israel for placing a spotlight on this important issue and for his work protecting consumers from fraud and abuse."

The USSS, in addition to its role in preventing the counterfeiting of U.S. currency, is tasked with safeguarding the payment and financial systems of the U.S. Due to their financial jurisdiction, many of the ATM skimming cases are investigated by the USSS, but the public rarely finds out about them and many of the details stay within the agency. Israel's letter calls for more of this evidence to be released so the public is aware of how and where these incidents are occurring.

Over the past three years, the number of reported skimming incidents has risen by 10 percent each year. And in December of 2011, Nassau County police arrested two men for installing skimming devices on four Citibank ATMs in Levittown, South Huntington, Garden City, and East Meadow.

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